



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE OLD TIME SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS OF LOS ANGELES.

BY J. M. GUINN.

[Published in the Los Angeles Daily Times, May 22, 1896.]

The recent meeting of the Southern California Teachers' Association in this city, at which 1200 educators assembled, and the prospective meeting this summer in some other city of the 12,000 or more members of the National Educational Association, whom we had hoped to welcome here, is evidence in disputable that the "schoolmaster is abroad in the land," and is evidence, too, that at times the schoolmistress is not at home.

In looking over the assemblage of teachers in the Normal Hall at a recent meeting of the association, I was led to compare this association with the first teachers' institute or association ever held in Los Angeles.

October 31, 1870, just a little over a quarter of a century ago, the writer assisted in organizing the first teachers' association held in our city. At that institute the entire teaching force of the city and county of Los Angeles, including the area now in Orange county, was just thirty-five teachers. Now in the same area there are 900. Then there were but six High Schools in the entire state, not one of which was in Southern California, now there are that many in Los Angeles county alone. If I were asked for some single standard by which to measure the rapid, but at the same time permanent growth of Los Angeles, I would answer the increase of our public schools.

The first community want the American pioneer supplies is the schoolhouse. Wherever the pioneers from the New England and the Middle states planted a settlement there at the same time they planted a schoolhouse. The first community want that the Spanish pobladores (colonists) supplied was a church. The schoolhouse was not wanted, or if wanted was the long-felt want that never was satisfied.

At the time of the acquisition of California by the Americans (1846) seventy-seven years from the date of its first settlement, there was not, to the best of my knowledge and reasearch, a public schoolhouse owned by any pueblo or city in all California. The few schools that did exist were kept in rented buildings, or the schoolmaster furnished the schoolroom as part of the contract.

The first school in California was opened in San Jose in December, 1794, seventeen years after the founding of the Pueblo.

The pioneer teacher of California was Manuel de Vargas, a retired sergeant of infantry. The school was opened in the public granary. Vargas in 1795, was offered \$250 a year to open a school in San Diego, and as this

was higher wages than he was receiving, true to the instincts of the profession, he took it, and thus became the pioneer teacher of Southern California. José Manuel Toca, a gamute, or ship-boy, arrived at Santa Barbara on a Spanish transport the same year, 1795, and was employed as schoolmaster at \$125 a year. Thus the army and the navy pioneered education in California. In 1797 Toca was ordered to report for duty on his ship, and José Medino, another gamute took his place as schoolmaster. Vargas, the pioneer pedagogue, seems to have been somewhat of an educational tramp. We find him in 1798-99 teaching in Santa Barbara. With the close of the century he disappears from the educational field.

Gov. Borica, the patron of the public schools, who, with such material as he could command, had made an earnest effort to establish a system of public education, resigned in 1800, and was succeeded by Arrillaga. Gov. Arrillaga, if not openly hostile, was indifferent to the education of the common people. He took life easy, and the schools took a vacation of fifteen years. Gov. Sola, the successor of Arrillaga, made an effort to establish public schools, but the indifference of the people discouraged him.

There seems to have been no school opened in Los Angeles during Borica's rule. Los Angeles being neither a maritime or presidial town, there were probably no soldiers or sailors out of a job who could turn their attention to school keeping. With the revival of learning under Sola, the first school in Los Angeles was opened in 1817, just thirty-six years after the founding of the Pueblo. Maximo Piña, an invalid soldier, was the pioneer schoolmaster of Los Angeles. His salary was \$140 a year. Where his schoolhouse was located, the record does not tell. Probably, like Vargas, he held forth in the public granary, which was located on the east side of the old plaza.

The Spanish and Mexican Governors made spasmodic efforts to establish public schools, but with little success. The people took but little interest in them, the school terms were short, the vacations long. There were well educated and intelligent men among the wealthy class of Californians, but the common people were ignorant of book learning. A few of the wealthier rancheros sent their sons to Mexico to be educated. The girls picked up what little education they got at home.

The old soldier schoolmasters were tyrants, and their school government a military despotism. The course of instruction in their schools and their discipline was modeled after Pete Jones' alliterative formula: "Lickin' and larnin'; no lickin' no larnin'." The following graphic description of the old-time schools and schoolmasters of California is found in a compilation by Bancroft from the writings of Gen. M. G. Vallejo, one of the ablest and most liberal-minded men California has produced. It is, no doubt, a cor-

rect portraiture of the pioneer school and schoolmaster of Los Angeles:

"The room itself was long, narrow, badly lighted; unadorned walls, save by a huge green cross or the picture of some saint generally the virgin of Gaudalupe, suspended over the master's head or to one side of his table; dirty everywhere and in places dilapidated. There was a rude platform at one end on which was placed a table, covered with a dingy black cloth. Behind this table was seated, in a greasy dress of fantastic fashion, an inviolated old soldier, of ill-tempered visage and repulsive presence.

As the scholars reluctantly entered the chilling atmosphere each walked the length of the room, kneeled before the cross or saint, recited aloud the benediction and crossed himself. His devotions finished, he trembling, approached the master, saying, "La Mano, Señor Maestro," thereupon, that grave functionary, with a sort of a grunt or bellow, gave his hand to kiss.

Here is a description of a recitation from the same source: "If learning to write, the boy placed some heavy, black lines, called a pauta, under the paper, which he ruled with a piece of lead, afterwards taking the paper and a pen to the master, who, sharpening the latter with his knife, set him a copy according to his grade, of which there were eight, ranging from coarse marks and pot-hooks to fine writing in the old-fashioned round hand. The sheet completed, the child took it to the master. 'Here is a blot, you little rascal.' 'Pardon, Señor Maestro, tomorrow I will do better.' 'Hold out your hand, sirrah!' During the time devoted to the examination of copies the ferule had but little rest. But on the black cloth lay another and far more terrible implement of torture—a hempen scourge, with iron points—a nice invention, truly, for helping little children to keep from laughing aloud, running in the streets, playing truant, spilling ink, or failing to know the lessons in the dreaded doctrina Christiana—the only lesson taught, perhaps, because it was the only one the master could teach; to fail in the doctrina was an offense unpardonable. This very appropriate inquisitorial instrument of torture was in daily use. One by one each little guilty wretch was stripped of his poor shirt—often his only garment—stretched face downward upon a bench, with a handkerchief thrust into his mouth as a gag, and lashed with a dozen or more blows until the blood ran down from his little lacerated back."

When such brutality was practiced in them it is not strange the schools were unpopular.

School supplies were scarce in those days. The habilitado (paymaster) furnished the writing paper from the government stores. When it was well covered over with pot-hooks and choice round-hand extracts from the Catechism and doctrina Christiana, it was returned to the soldiers to be manufactured into cartridges. So, when poor Lo went on the warpath it sometimes happened that he was converted into a good Indian by having a choice extract of the Catechism or doctrina shot into him.

Maximo Pina, the pioneer pedagogue of Los Angeles, taught during the years 1817 and 1818. Then the schools took a vacation of nine years, probably to allow the pupils' backs to heal. During the vacation, the government changed from the monarchical domination of Spain to the republican rule of Mexico. In the first forty six years of its existence, if the record is correct, the Pueblo of Los Angeles enjoyed educational facilities just two years. There was no educational cramming in those days.

Mexico did better for public education in California than Spain. The school terms were increased and the vacations shortened.

Luciano Valdez, the successor of Pina, taught in 1827-28-29-30. Joaquin Botiller in 1831, Vicente Morago in 1832, Cristoval Auguilar in 1833, and Francisco Pontoja in 1834. In 1836 the ayuntamiento petitioned the governor to detail an officer of the army for a schoolmaster, as no one qualified for the position could be found in the town. Ensign Guadalupe Medina was granted leave of absence to act as perceptor. He seems to have been a very efficient teacher. In 1838 Ignacio Caronel and his daughter opened a school on the Lancasterian plan and kept it open till 1842.

Guadalupe Medina taught in 1843, and the early part of 1844. Luisa Arguella in 1844. Ensign Medina again resumed the birch in 1845, but laid it down in a few months to take up the sword. Los Angeles was having one of its periodical revolutions. The schoolhouse was needed for barracks. The pupils were given a vacation—a vacation, by the way, that lasted five years. The gringos conquered California the next year and when school took up the country was under a new government.

The first public school opened in Los Angeles after the American acquisition, and the last one taught in the Spanish language, was kept by Francisco Bustamente. There is a contract on record made June 21, 1850, between him and the president of the city council, Don Abel Stearns, in which Bustamente agrees "to teach the scholars to read and count, and so far as he is capable, to teach them orthography and good morals"—Compensation \$60 a month, and \$20 for rent of school-room to be paid out of the public funds. The pioneer English school was opened in 1850 by the Rev. Dr. Weeks and John G. Nichols. This was a private school. Between 1850 and 1854 there were several private schools. Miss Julia Dalton taught a primary school in 1852-53. T. J. Scully in 1853 and M. A. Hoyt in 1854. The genial J. Frank Burns taught a subscription school in a large tent near San Gabriel in 1853-4. Later on he was county superintendent of schools. In 1854 the erection of the first school building owned by the city was begun. This was "School-House No. 1," located on the northwest corner of Spring and Second streets; on the lot now occupied by the Bryson block and the police station. It was a modest two-room structure built of brick. (Later on it was enlarged to four rooms.) Unpre-

tentious as it was, it was the pride of the city, and the finest school building in Southern California at that time.

School was opened in it March 19, 1855. William A. Wallace in charge of the boys' department and Miss Louisa Hayes in charge of the girls' department. Coeducation of the sexes then and for many years after was not tolerated in the public schools of Los Angeles. This schoolhouse then was well out of town, the bulk of the inhabitants residing north of First street.

The Los Angeles Star of March 17, 1855, in an editorial urging the planting of trees on the school lot, says: "The ground to be enclosed is sufficiently large for play grounds, and the trees, if they flourish, will afford grateful shelter from the sun's heat. But this is not all, for when the feasibility of growing trees upon the naked plain is fairly tested the owners of lots in the neighborhood will imitate the good example and thus not only secure a great comfort to themselves but a claim to the gratitude of those who may hereafter travel our dusty streets." "Naked plain" around the corner of Spring and Second streets sounds antediluvian now.

Wallace, after a few months' teaching, laid down the birch and mounted the editorial tripod. The tripod seemed to be an uncomfortable seat for him. He got off in a short time. Of his subsequent career I know nothing. William McKee, an educated young Irishman, succeeded him in the school. McKee was a successful teacher. The school grounds had been inclosed by a Mexican picket fence—a structure made of willow poles for pickets, intertwined with rawhide thongs. The shade trees grew, but when the green feed on the plains around dried up, the innumerable ground squirrels that infested the mesa made a raid on the trees, ate the leaves and girdled the branches. McKee, to protect his trees, procured a shotgun, and when he was not teaching the young idea how to shoot he was shooting squirrels. There was one man who did not appreciate McKee's efforts to grow shade trees on the "naked plain" around the schoolhouse; and he was the "hombre" that had the contract of supplying the school with water. There was no water system then and water for domestic purposes was supplied by water carriers from carts. McKee used water from the school barrel to water the trees. The paisano who supplied the water reported to the trustees that that gringo "maestro de escuela" (schoolmaster) was wasting the public water in trying to grow trees on the mesa, where "any fool might know they wouldn't grow." The trees did survive the squirrels and the waterman's wrath. The older residents will recollect the black locusts that shaded the Spring-street front of the school lot. They were cut down in 1884. McKee long since laid down the birch. He now resides in San Francisco, a hale and hearty old bachelor. The late Thomas J. Scully was the Nestor of Los

Angeles teachers in length of service in the county. Scully was a graduate of the Toronto Normal School and was probably the first normal graduate to teach in our schools. He began teaching in the city in 1853, but soon turned his attention to the country schools. There were only three districts in the county then and the amount of public funds received by each was small. Scully would teach in one until the funds were exhausted, then move on to the next and so on until he had made the rounds. In this way he was enabled to give all the schools of the county a uniform system and no change of teachers. Scully, in his pedagogical peregrinations, reached a certain district where, not heeding the advice of the late Samuel Weller, "beware of vidders," he was captivated by the black eyes and winning smiles of a little widow. Scully laid down the birch, married and turned his attention to cultivating his wife's vineyard and making wine. He found a home market for a considerable quantity of his wine crop and domestic infelicity followed. A social eruption threw Scully outside of the family circle. He laid down the wine cup, reformed, took up the birch and waved it successfully until his death, which occurred last December. He taught in the county over thirty years. He was a genial, whole souled man and was well liked by all who knew him.

At the close of the schools in June, 1856, forty years ago, the first public school examination ever held in the city was conducted by William McKee and Miss Louisa Hayes. The boys declaimed and read compositions, and Michael Sansevain performed some feats in mental arithmetic. "The young ladies in Miss Hayes's department were elegantly dressed, and formed an assemblage as remarkable as well for beauty as for intelligence," says the bachelor editor of the *Star*. "A number of well-written compositions were read in a graceful and effective manner. Where all were excellent, it may seem invidious to mention names, but we think the following young ladies were conspicuous for general proficiency: Misses Mary Wheeler, Lucinda Macy, Margaret Brody, Louisa Hoover, Natividad Aguilar." At the close of the examinations several susceptible young gentlemen present, charmed with the proficiency of the young ladies, "chipped in" and raised a donation of \$122 to buy maps and globes for the school. Some of those susceptible young gentlemen, now gray and grizzled grandfathers, may, if they should chance to read this, recall that gala day in the schools of Los Angeles long ago.

The schoolhouse north of the Plaza, known as schoolhouse No. 2, was completed and occupied early in 1856. It was a two room building, located on Bath street, now North Main. It was demolished when the street was widened and extended. Two schoolhouses for a number of years supplied the educational needs of the city. The schoolhouse north of the Plaza was more centrally located than the Spring street building—the Plaza at the time being the center of the population of the city.

The first teachers' institute was organized in this building, October 31, 1870. It was held there because the school building on the corner of Spring and Second streets was too far out of town then. There were no hotels then south of First street, and the business center of the city was on Los Angeles street, between Arcadia and Commercial. The officers of the institute were: William M. McFadden, County Superintendent, president; J. M. Guinn and T. H. Rose, vice-presidents, and P. C. Tonner, secretary. All these have long since laid down the pedagogical birch. The entire teaching force of the city schools consisted of five teachers; of the county, thirty (which included the area now in Orange.)

The institute was pronounced a decided success by those who participated in it. One small schoolroom held the members and the audience, and still there was room for more. Hon. O. P. Fitzgerald, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, now Bishop Fitzgerald of the M. E. Church South, of California, was present. An amusing episode occurred at this institute, which I have no doubt the bishop has laughed over many a time, "for he's a jolly good fellow." A certain ex-pedagogue known as Prof. B., read an essay on "Scolding." Scarcely had he taken his seat when a lady arose and began to soundly berate the professor. Superintendent Fitzgerald, who was presiding, at first supposed she was giving an object lesson in scolding, to illustrate the subject of the essay, but when, with vehement utterances she denounced the professor as a thief—"He stole my well," Superintendent Fitzgerald, in his blandest tones, remarked: "Madame, I do not find your exercise down on the programme, and I shall have to call you to order." We all regretted that Superintendent Fitzgerald did not ask her to explain the professor's feat in physics, the carrying off of her well—a hole in the ground. The disputants have long since gone to heaven, where we hope all is "well" with them. The trouble between them had grown out of disputed land boundaries, a fruitful source then of neighborhood quarrels.

In early times the schoolmasters had the profession to themselves. As late as 1868 the male teachers were in the majority in the county, the count standing, schoolmasters, 17; schoolmistresses, 10. In all the years since then the masters have steadily gone down in relative numbers and the mistresses have gone up, until now the lords of creation in the profession are reduced to the condition foretold by the old prophet: "When seven women shall lay hold on one man," the relative numbers in the profession standing about seven female to one male teacher, outside of the high schools.

Dr. Wm. B. Osburn was the first superintendent of the Los Angeles city schools. He was appointed by the city council, June 4, 1855. Osburn was postmaster at the time of his appointment. No doubt the council selected him because he was a man of letters. In addition to the duties of

postmaster and school superintendent he conducted an auction house. He seems to have been a man of versatile genius. He was successively physician, postmaster, justice of the peace, councilman, auctioneer and horticulturist. Possibly at some subsequent period in his checkered career he may have waved the pedagogical birch. Among his duties as superintendent he was required to examine teachers, grant certificates, visit the schools monthly and hold public school examinations yearly.

All city school reports of late years give Dr. Wm. T. Lucky as the first superintendent of city schools. This is an error. Osburn filled the office nearly twenty years before Dr. Lucky's time. The Rev. Dr. Elias Birdsell also filled the office for some time. The office was abolished in 1867, and created again in 1873, when Dr. Lucky became superintendent.

The High School was organized in 1873 by Dr. William T. Lucky. It was the first, and for a number of years the only High School in Southern California. It met with considerable opposition at first, on account of the additional expense, but prospered, all the same. Times were changing. There was a "new heaven and a new earth" in Southern California, and "old things were passing away and all things were becoming new."

ERRATA.

Page 10,	line 16,	read Coronel; for Caronel
" 28,	" 1,	read: who were founders of families.
" 30,	" 1,	" cuera blanca.
" 30, 31	" —	" Ruiz for Ruis.
" 36,	" 34,	" conquista for conquesta.
" 49,	" 34,	" rancheria for rancharia.
" 59,	" 5,	" those who are qualified, etc.
" 60,	" 12,	" part for past.
" 61,	" 18,	" fallacies for follaces.
" 62,	" 6,	" Señora for Soñora.
" 63,	" 24,	" clung for cling.
" 67,	" 37,	" says for say.